



A QUALITATIVE COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ETHNIC COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS

AN EVALUATION FOR THE CITY OF HAMTRAMCK, MICHIGAN

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AUTHORS:

Paula Sorrell, principal investigator and director
Sarah Crane, research project manager
Paul Fontaine, program manger, Taubman College's Michigan Engaging Community
Ryan Glauser, graduate student assistant
Sarah Richardson, graduate student assistant
Carmen Wells Quigg, project manager

ABOUT ECONOMIC GROWTH INSTITUTE:

The Economic Growth Institute has provided innovative economic development programming and applied research for almost 40 years. Through our work, we build more resilient businesses and communities, connect university innovations with small and medium-sized enterprises, and provide student learning experiences for the next generation of community and business leaders.

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INTRODUCTION

OVERVIEW

As recent reports have shown, immigrants and refugees positively contribute to local economies and help revitalize cities. In Wayne County, the immigrant population increased by 21.4 percent while the overall county population decreased by 2.2 percent; however, the decline would have been 3.9 percent without the growth in immigration.¹ As immigrants continue to be the primary source of population growth in Wayne County,² it is imperative to consider strategies for both community and economic development of these unique communities. Small business growth provides a multi-pronged approach that delivers ethnic-specific services while also growing immigrant business ownership, local employment, and wealth creation opportunities. Within Wayne County, immigrant populations demonstrate a strong propensity for entrepreneurship: the immigrant worker rate is 9.7 percent, higher than the 6.0 percent rate for U.S.-born workers.³

While Hamtramck continues to improve city services and activate its 2010 Master Plan, it has also begun to consider comprehensive corridor strategies. Diverse, successful corridors can offer a safe route to school, a vibrant and unique commercial setting, multi-family housing options,

recreational assets, and even an environmental tool through the inclusion of stormwater and habitat nodes. Conant Street on Hamtramck's east side offers an exploratory case on how the city can revitalize existing commercial corridors to be more dynamic, responsive and productive spaces for the communities it serves. This area, identified by the city as "Banglatown,"⁴ between Carpenter and Holbrook street, is emerging as a potential commercial destination serving residents from a variety of Southeast Asian and Middle Eastern countries, including Bangladesh, India, and Yemen.

Through comparative case study analysis, the research team evaluated successful corridors, defined as a commercial enclave of established and growing immigrant-owned businesses that represents and serves a local ethnic community, as well as appeals to and engages the surrounding region. It is surprising that no nationally-organized network or governmental entity exists to identify appropriate tools and resources, case studies or mentoring opportunities for emerging ethnic commercial corridors. This research study, therefore, addresses a critical gap in both practitioner resources and academic literature.⁵ The strategies outlined provide an initial survey to better understand best practices of these communities that can foster their development.

This research is one facet of comprehensive strategies needed for Hamtramck's diverse population. Additional support structures include, but are not limited to, schools with resources and training to handle peak flows of new residents



Rainbow Chinese Restaurant and Bar on 'Eat Street' in Minneapolis has been open since 1987. This ethnic commercial corridor features about 40 ethnic businesses.

Photo: Meet Minneapolis

1 Wayne United, "New Data: Wayne County Immigrants Contributed More Than \$10.5B to GDP," Charter County of Wayne Michigan, Wayne County, Michigan, 2019. <https://www.waynecounty.com/county/new-data-wayne-county-immigrants-contributed-more-than.aspx>.

2 New American Economy, "New Americans and a New Direction: The Role of Immigrants in Reviving the Great Lakes Region," New Americans and a New Direction: The Role of Immigrants in Reviving the Great Lakes Region, Washington D.C.: New American Economy. http://www.newamericaneconomy.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/NAE_Great-Lakes_V9_FINAL.pdf

3 New American Economy, "New Americans and a New Direction: The Role of Immigrants in Reviving the Great Lakes Region."

4 The City Council formerly established Banglatown with Resolution 2019-28 on April 28, 2019.

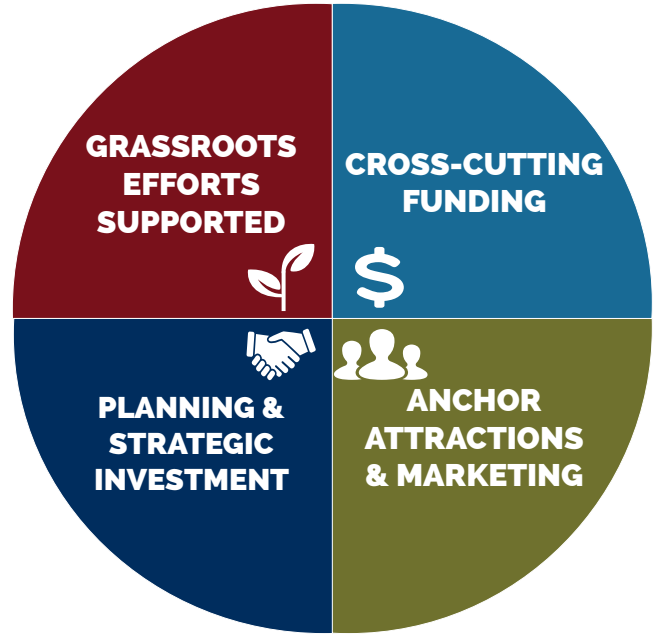
5 Overall, there is very little academic research on ethnic commercial corridors. Most of the research focuses on individual communities and how a specific trend or theory describes the formation of ethnic businesses in that specific case study. A few extrapolations can be made about businesses in ethnic communities, but the creation of ethnic commercial corridors remains elusive. In addition, the literature seems to have multiple terms (multiethnicity, immigrant, ethnic) to describe a similar phenomena (businesses in immigrant communities) which leads the literature to remain sporadic and not well developed in terms of connections within the field.

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speaking a variety of languages, a medical system that understands and can identify cultural norms and public health issues, and public infrastructure that meets community needs. Additionally, entrepreneurial support systems enable businesses to thrive and its benefits spillover into the community and its residents. A comprehensive approach will help to ensure immigrants continue to call Wayne County and the Hamtramck area home.

The four strategies identified in this study are based on a case study comparative analysis, which included secondary data analysis, literature review and interviews with leaders in the community. The study groups these four areas into **local organizations, cross-cutting funding, planning & investment, and anchor attractions & marketing.**

Local organizations are a fundamental starting point for any commercial district. It is the local grassroots effort of the community, business owners, and leaders who will shape their community that attracts assistance and resources. Cross-cutting funding builds the capacity of the commercial district with investments in people and businesses. Planning and public investment addresses infrastructure and resources to deliver services, support further development, and provide for public safety. Last, anchor attractions and marketing recognizes the importance of supporting and leveraging destination elements for local shoppers and visitors. Destinations such as unique restaurants, clusters of shopping, cultural attractions, or events serve as a focal point for communication and customer attraction.



The comparable communities represent different spectrums of activity within these four areas. While these four strategies were evident in the analysis, it should be noted that these are not discrete from one another. Effective and appropriate planning and investments can only exist with cross-cutting funding. Likewise, anchor attractions are supported and further developed through planning and investment. These four strategies help clarify steps in the development of complex and understudied ethnic commercial corridors. Specific applications to communities, such as Hamtramck, are identified through the recommendations concurrent with the respective strategy; however, further analysis for feasibility is recommended.



South Grand in St. Louis, Missouri, features 23 immigrant-owned restaurants from 14 different countries. In 2009, a streetscape project was funded through federal and state funds. The project reduced the number of traffic lanes, added street lighting and landscaping, and improved sidewalk infrastructure.

Photo: South Grand CID

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OVERVIEW OF BANGLATOWN

As a diverse community, the City of Hamtramck has unique opportunities for business and economic development. The Banglatown area appears to be growing with potential for increased economic development. The cluster of ethnic food, apparel, and religious stores surrounded by residential immigrant enclaves could lead to the development of a strong and sustainable ethnic commercial corridor.⁶ The goal of this research is to understand the best practices from successful ethnic commercial corridors to determine potential next steps for the development of Banglatown.

Currently, most of the corridor is concentrated on Conant Street between Caniff Street and Carpenter Avenue. This stretch, which straddles Hamtramck and Detroit, features signage of “Bangladesh Avenue”⁷ on the Hamtramck-side and “Banglatown” on the Detroit-side. The shared nature of the shopping area creates challenges for neighborhood

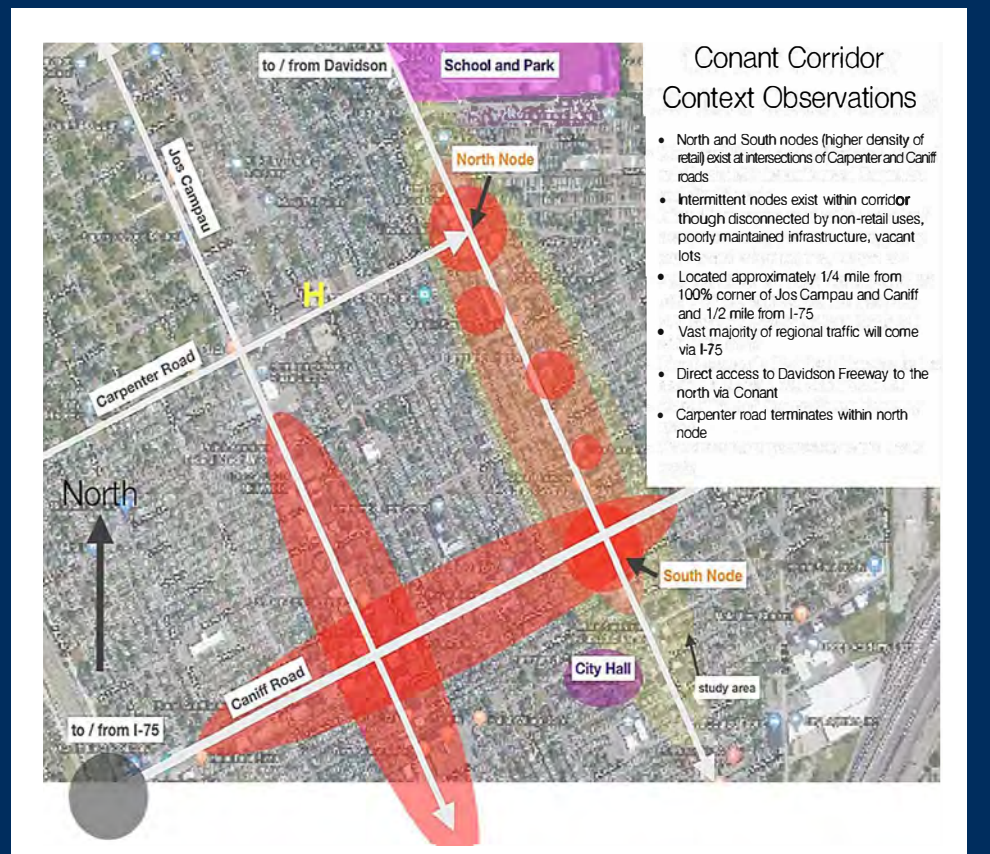
planning and investment; however, consumers recognize the area as a single, unified entity.⁸ Based on the number of business licenses, the district is estimated to have 25 stores, 56 percent have been in business for more than five years.

At this time, two highly concentrated commercial nodes exist at the intersections of Conant and Carpenter, and Conant and Caniff. In between these nodes, businesses are sporadic along both sides of Conant. The area faces challenges created by the division along civic boundaries, as well as business concentration. While like-businesses straddle both sides of Conant in a few areas, which demonstrates strong potential for the corridor,⁹ this is only in select areas. In addition, Banglatown is a secondary shopping area for non-resident consumers entering the community from I-75, with Joseph Campau always serving as the first entry point and shopping area (see map below).

MAP OF HAMTRAMCK

In the last decade, Hamtramck’s population has remained around 22,000. While the white community has steadily dropped to about 12,000 residents, many non-white ethnic groups have increased. People self-identifying as Asian, which includes those from South Asia and the Middle East, has increased by nearly 4 percent each year to 5,357 from 2006 - 2016. Those self-identifying as two races has increased 12 percent each year to 1,216.¹ These changes are associated with an increase in the Bengali, Yemeni, and Indian ethnic communities over the last decade. These three groups are represented in the consumers and current businesses in Banglatown.

1 Compiled from data made available by American Community Survey (ACS) between 2006 and 2017. See the following link for the ACS website: <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs>



6 As referenced in the introduction, the entrepreneurship rate is 9.7 percent for immigrant-born workers and 6.1 percent for U.S.-born workers in Wayne County.

7 George Tysh, “Little Bengal,” Metro Times, June 5, 2002. <https://archive.md/20130909034854/http://www2.metrotimes.com/arts/story.asp?id=3338#selection-643.0-643.13>

8 Walking Tour on August 15, 2019 in Hamtramck, MI; Walter Wasacz, “The Future of Hamtramck Is Being Built Today,” Model D Media, April 1, 2016. <https://www.modeldmedia.com/features/hamtramck-local-economy-040116.aspx>; Jeff Karoub, “Yemeni Immigrants Focus on Future in US amid War Back Home,” AP News, March 5, 2018. <https://apnews.com/f1e956bba20a4ca7913e41d456dae394>

9 Walking Tour on August 15, 2019 in Hamtramck, MI.

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While considering the opportunities and potential for development initiatives, community challenges must also be acknowledged. Conant Street is a county road, therefore Wayne County must be engaged as a critical partner in infrastructure investments. For example, the sidewalks along Conant Street are in desperate need of repair to foster mobility and accessibility within Banglatown. While DTE Energy is currently installing new infrastructure under sidewalks and repairing those respective areas, all the sidewalks along the streets are in need of repair.¹⁰

The financial constraints for both the residents and its government are another necessary consideration. Hamtramck faces a poverty rate of about 50 percent, while the average poverty rate for the comparable communities was 30 percent.¹¹ Additionally, the city faces numerous critical issues after state emergency management from 2013 to 2018, making prioritization difficult with limited resources.¹²

Another area that must be acknowledged for this study is that diversity can be a double-edged sword for community involvement and engagement. Other ethnic communities are attempting to broaden to multi-ethnic districts by involving multiple groups, rather than emphasizing a single ethnicity. Hamtramck embraces its diversity and also must

work to build bridges between the numerous groups within the community. Finally, trust in government institutions and actors needs continued growth within Hamtramck. Minority communities often struggle to engage with government institutions for numerous reasons. Facing these systemic issues will be key to the general success of Hamtramck, as well as the potential development of an ethnic commercial corridor.

¹⁰ Walking tour on August 15, 2019 in Hamtramck, MI.

¹¹ Compiled from data made available by American Community Survey (ACS) between 2006 and 2017.

¹² Nick A. Khouri, "Exit Letter to Mayor Karen Majewski," Hamtramck Resolution 2018-1, Lansing: State of Michigan Department of Treasury, 2018.

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METHODOLOGY

The research team utilized a comparative analysis of communities to benchmark similarities and differences between cases – ethnic commercial corridors, defined as a commercial enclave of established and growing immigrant-owned businesses that represents and serves a local ethnic community, and appeals to and engages a broader community. The team began with an introductory overview of Banglatown’s assets by stakeholders through a walking tour on August 15, 2019. The research team identified several necessary comparative assets including an ethnic minority; immigrant community;¹³ a resurgence of local economic activity;¹⁴ and similar community feelings and attitudes towards their city and region.¹⁵

Ethnic commercial corridors:

A commercial enclave of established and growing immigrant-owned businesses that represents and serves a local ethnic community, as well as appeals to and engages a broader community.

Limiting the analysis to comparable communities minimizes the outside influence of other communities on the present characteristics of Hamtramck itself. Comparatives from the West or East Coast introduced too much variance since these cities and their respective ethnic communities experienced drastically different political, economic, and social forces than cities in the middle of the country since the 1970s.¹⁶ With these prerequisites, the team identified the following neighborhoods as comparables, to a reasonable degree: Eat Street in the Whittier neighborhood in Minneapolis; South Grand Boulevard in St. Louis; Asiatown in Cleveland; Clarkston, Georgia; Broadway-Fillmore

neighborhood in Buffalo. These were identified as successful commercial corridors because they have established and growing immigrant-owned businesses that represent and serve a local ethnic community, as well as appeal to and engage a broader community.

Data collected for each community included secondary data, literature review and interviews with leaders in the community. From this, the team conducted the comparative case study analysis.

BASELINE CHARACTERISTICS OF COMPARABLE COMMUNITIES

After the initial asset comparison to Hamtramck, the research team evaluated commonalities between the communities. Four baseline characteristics emerged:

An organic, existing cluster of immigrant businesses

The foundation of the ethnic commercial corridor developed organically by local business owners. Afterwards groups of local leaders came alongside to further the organic advances.

Local residential community

The businesses developed to initially serve a growing ethnic community, located close to the commercial corridor.

Employed residents

The ethnic enclaves of residents in each of these communities found stable employment in the surrounding area.

Mobility

The accessibility of the area to a broader and more general consumer group was important in each city.



Transportation was available in all comparable communities. Above is a photo of the metro transit in Eat Street in Minneapolis. Additionally, the beautification of Nicollet Ave with widened sidewalks can be seen.

Photo: Metro Transit and Meet Minneapolis

13 Kurt Metzger and Jason Booza, "Asians in the United States, Michigan and Metropolitan Detroit." Working Paper Series, Center for Urban Studies, Wayne State University, no. 7 (January 2002): 1–38. <http://www.cus.wayne.edu/media/1359/asians7.pdf>

14 Walter Wasacz, "The future of Hamtramck is being built today"; Jeff Karoub, "Yemeni immigrants focus on future in US amid war back home."

15 Walking Tour on August 15, 2019 in Hamtramck, MI.

16 Mette Anderson, "Theorizing through Comparative Case Studies" in *Theory in Action: Theoretical Constructionism*, Brill Publishers: Leiden, 2016.

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COMMUNITY SNAPSHOTS

Each of the ethnic communities evolved from a residential enclave to a cluster of ethnic-specific businesses. At a certain point in their development, these business clusters began to attract a broader market from the surrounding area. The below summaries provide a brief snapshot of each community. Further details on the communities can be found in the Appendix.

Eat Street, Minneapolis, Minnesota

Broad appeal and diversity with well-established ethnic and local businesses

The Whittier neighborhood in south Minneapolis is home to “Eat Street,” a thriving ethnic business corridor known for its wide array of restaurants offering food from around the world. The community has become so popular that it is currently attracting new business development like farm-to-table restaurants. The 17-block district draws visitors from across the city to its multitude of dining options, as well as anchor attractions, like the Minneapolis Institute of Art. While some ethnic restaurants have been in the community since the 1970s and 1980s, much of the development has been within the last 30 years. The Eat Street corridor includes over 40 ethnic businesses, many of which have been operating for at least ten years. These businesses serve tourists as well as the local immigrant community.



CAAM Chinese Dance Theater performer at the Eat Street Fest hosted by the Whittier Alliance. The area received significant support for development in the 1990s and continues to thrive today with both ethnic and local restaurants and shopping.
Photo: Whittier Alliance

South Grand, St. Louis, Missouri

A small, six-block corridor with a variety of ethnic restaurants

South Grand neighborhood in St. Louis is a diverse ethnic business corridor. The neighborhood serves as a comparative community due to its high concentration of well-established immigrant-run businesses and strong community-based nonprofits that lead community and business development, marketing, and public sector infrastructure investments. The community features 23 immigrant-owned businesses from 14 different countries. Many of the ethnic businesses in the South Grand neighborhood have been operating for over ten years. For example, a Thai restaurant has been operating since 1980, and an Iranian cafe has been open since 1983.¹⁷ The low vacancy rates in the area make new business development less common.¹⁸

Asiatown, Cleveland, Ohio



Cafe Natasha's Restaurant in South Grand. The Persian restaurant has been open for more than 30 years and was recently renovated by the owners. The streetscaping around the restaurant was part of a 2009 federal and state investment.

Photo: South Grand CID

¹⁷ See the following links for the websites of Cafe Natasha, and The King and I. <https://cafenatasha.com/index.php>; <http://kingandistl.com/about>

¹⁸ Interview with community stakeholders on October 22, 2019.

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An organic ethnic district that has survived three moves and thrives on grassroots efforts

Cleveland is home to Asiatown, an Asian community that dates back to the 1880s. The community's long-term development has been led by grassroots efforts. Residents opened businesses serving their own needs in three waves: 1950s, 1970s, 2000s. These waves are associated with the relocation of the community's center into neighboring areas.

The movement of the community has aided in the creation of three highly concentrated nodes of ethnic businesses through organic, private community investment. In the past decade, the community has organized several cultural events to form a public image of Asiatown beyond the Asian community. In turn, they hope to spur new investment and attract new consumers from the non-Asian community.



Asia Plaza in Cleveland's Asiatown is one of three concentrated nodes of businesses. The shopping area at 2999 Payne Ave offers an assortment of Asian inspired restaurants, as well as an Asian grocery store. The plaza primarily serves the residents of Asiatown, but also hosts the Cleveland Asian Festival every year.

Photo: Asia Plaza website

Clarkston, Georgia

An immigrant and refugee community that provides significant support to its residents, with most businesses owned by immigrants

This 1.1 square-mile town brands itself as the "Ellis Island of the South," due to the highly diverse group of both immigrants and refugees settling here over the last 30 years. The majority of businesses in Clarkston are owned or operated by immigrants or refugees, with several open for decades. The city has leveraged both public investments and private support for its infrastructure and community development. Additionally, a locally-owned coffee shop which opened in 2015 to employ and serve refugees has started to pull in visitors from the surrounding metro area.



Three ethnic business storefronts in Clarkston. The city estimates that more than 90 percent of businesses are immigrant-owned.

Photo: Wikimedia Commons

Broadway-Fillmore, Buffalo, New York

While an ethnic commercial corridor is still developing, the community has some initial baseline characteristics that reflect both Hamtramck and the comparable communities.

The thriving Bengali community in Broadway-Fillmore can be attributed to organic community efforts that have recently been supported by long-term planning by the city and state, resulting in a general resurgence of the district. The Bengali community initially relocated to the neighborhood after the 2008 Financial Crisis, drawn by relatively inexpensive housing prices. Over several years, the community began opening businesses that supported its cultural and religious identity, as well as the broader Muslim community in Buffalo. Since 2016, the city and state have both recognized the strides taken in the Broadway-Fillmore district and began organizing investment and projects that will support the community while also enticing further outside investment.



The Buffalo Central Terminal lies at the heart of Broadway-Fillmore. The city and state are currently planning the redevelopment of the landmark.

Photo: Buffalo Central Terminal website

STRATEGY 1: LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS AND INTERMEDIARIES

Local organization(s) emerge to support residents and businesses. An intermediary builds linkages between the ethnic businesses and the regional community to broaden the consumer base and highlight the value of the commercial corridor.

Ethnic commercial corridors emerge from clusters of businesses that open and grow to serve the local populations. Corridors sustaining long-term success in the communities were supported by a variety of local organizations. Some started as informal groupings of business leaders while others are formal external organizations with specific objectives to assist the residents and businesses.

An additional aspect of this strategy is that along with the development and evolution of the local organization, an intermediary emerged. This key role is a person (or people) who are able to engage outside stakeholders - government leaders, nonprofit leaders and a broader consumer audience - to advocate for the value of the area, as well as translate the needs and concerns of the external stakeholders back to the business owners. Eventually, this leads to the marketing of the area (See Strategy 4); however, in this strategy the intermediary creates vital connections with the broader community to allow the value and needs of the businesses to be heard.

Below is an overview of examples from each community and this evolution.

EAT STREET, MINNEAPOLIS

From the 1960s-1970s, the Whittier neighborhood experienced significant challenges with Interstate 35 cutting the area off from the neighboring Phillips community, the closure of Nicollet Avenue to accommodate a larger parking lot for K-Mart, and rising crime and prostitution activity. In response to the deterioration of the neighborhood, the Whittier Alliance Neighborhood Association formed in 1977. At the same time, immigrants began to move into the neighborhood and open businesses. In the 1990s, the city began efforts to revitalize the area, including funding for the Whittier Alliance to develop a business association, a large streetscape revitalization project, and rebranding of Nicollet Avenue as "Eat Street."



Whittier Alliance, a nonprofit funded by the city, supports development and community activities along Eat Street.

Photo: Whittier Alliance Facebook Profile picture

Today, the Whittier Alliance and its business association is an advocate for both the residents and businesses in the area. Additionally, it offers facade improvement grants, resources for graffiti removal, and support in accessing resources. The Whittier Alliance has provided important connections for the immigrant-owned businesses to the broader Minneapolis area through marketing efforts and connections to resources and nonprofits.

SOUTH GRAND, ST. LOUIS

The South Grand area of St. Louis became a bustling commercial district in the early 20th century, bolstered by the 1904 World's Fair in the city. In the 1960s, residents left South Grand for the suburbs and the street experienced vacancy and disinvestment.¹⁹ Since the late 1980s, immigrants have moved to South Grand and have opened successful restaurants and businesses

¹⁹ South Grand CID. "From Prairie to Destination: The Story of South Grand" <http://southgrand.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/From-Prairie-to-Destination-The-Story-of-South-Grand.pdf>

STRATEGY 1: continued

along the six-block area.²⁰ South Grand now has 23 immigrant-owned businesses in the district from 14 different countries.

The immigrant-owned businesses were a tight-knit community, informally organized to support each other. In 2001, the South Grand Community Improvement District (CID) was formed by state legislation to further develop and promote the area. The South Grand CID is governed by residents and business owners within the district. This organization currently provides specific assistance to the district in marketing and highlighting the value of the area to the broader St. Louis community.

South Grand also houses the International Institute, a well funded immigrant and refugee services organization that provides wraparound services to immigrants across St. Louis, including South Grand. Their services include business support and small loans.

**ASIATOWN, CLEVELAND**

Asiatown's success can be attributed to the community's historic roots in Cleveland dating back to the nineteenth century, which has allowed the community to accumulate necessary capital and support networks over decades. Shops and restaurants initially opened in the 1950s and 1960s, then business declined and stagnated from 1970s - 1990s. However, the community has organically organized and focused on further development since the early-2000s.²¹

Two key organizations have assisted in the current grassroots development, the Organization of Chinese Americans (OCA) Greater Cleveland Chapter and the Greater Cleveland Chinese Chamber of Commerce. These organizations have assisted with business start up, outreach to broader audiences, and hosting of ethnic events.²² Alongside these efforts the St. Clair Superior Development Corporation and MidTown Cleveland have recently become involved in the community by refurbishing buildings and advocating for economic development programs to Cleveland.²³ Asiatown is the most 'organically' developed community where the intermediary



The South Grand CID redeveloped a parking area for residents and visitors. Photo: South Grand Facebook page



An example Facebook post from OCA Greater Cleveland celebrating a locally-organized event.

Photo: OCA Greater Cleveland Facebook page

role between the community and the city leaders is still developing. In interviews, the value of the community and its needs for public investment are an ongoing conversation.²⁴

²⁰ Cultural Resources Office, "A Preservation Plan for St. Louis Part I: Historic Contexts," St Louis-MO.gov, 2019. <https://www.stlouis-mo.gov/government/departments/planning/cultural-resources/preservation-plan/Part-I-Peopling-St-Louis.cfm>.

²¹ Alan F Dutka, *Asiatown Cleveland: from Tong Wars to Dim Sum*, Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2014.

²² Follow the links to the websites of the OCA Greater Cleveland Chapter and Greater Cleveland Chinese Chamber of Commerce: <https://ocagc.org/>; <https://www.clechinesechamber.com/>

²³ Follow the links to the website of St. Clair Superior Development and MidTown Cleveland: <https://www.stclairsuperior.org/>; <https://midtowncleveland.org/>

²⁴ Interview with community stakeholders on October 21, 2019.

STRATEGY 1: continued**CLARKSTON, GEORGIA**

A small city of 1.1 square miles, this area outside of Atlanta has earned a reputation as the “most diverse square mile in America,”²⁵ as it is home to immigrants and refugees from around the world moving here. A significant number of nonprofits operate in the city to support residents in their transition to the U.S.A., including the Clarkston Community Health Center, Amani Women’s Center, Clarkston Community Center, Friends of Refugees, and Clarkston Development Fund. These organizations form an important core within the community and many offer multilingual and culturally-tailored services and support.

The city center of Clarkson houses many of the core ethnic businesses of the community. The nonprofit support extends to these businesses. For example, Emory University supports a business program called Start:ME, a business accelerator, that has served 99 businesses in Clarkston and distributed capital to 20 businesses.²⁶



A local reading event hosted by the Clarkston CDF, a nonprofit focused on connecting and engaging the diverse residents of Clarkston and transforming education in the community. This is just one of many nonprofit organizations in Clarkston that support community development.
Photo: Clarkston CDF Facebook page

**BROADWAY-FILLMORE DISTRICT,
BUFFALO**

As an emerging Bengali ethnic community, Broadway-Fillmore has experienced a transition from a majority Polish community to a majority African American community. Currently, there is a growing population of Bengalis, as well as other Middle Eastern and Southeast Asian ethnic groups.²⁷ Informal support and mentoring of businesses is provided by businessman and Bengali immigrant, Atiqur Rahman.²⁸ Additionally, the Westminster Economic Development Initiative (WEDI) helps immigrants and refugees in Buffalo test new ideas for businesses in an incubator and provide legal assistance; for example, locating start-up funding and understanding tax incentives.²⁹

THE BUFFALO NEWS

Biz Talk: East Side entrepreneur helps Bangladeshi immigrants get settled in Buffalo

New owner of the old library building on Broadway turned hardware store, Atiqur Rahman, on Friday, Oct. 2, 2015. (Robert Kirkham/Buffalo News)

A news article from 2015 featuring Atiqur Rahman and his work with his fellow Bengalis
Photo: The Buffalo News website

25 Matthew Shaer, “Ellis Island South: Welcome to the Most Diverse Square Mile in America,” Atlanta Magazine, January 19, 2017. <https://www.atlantamagazine.com/great-reads/ellis-island-south-welcome-diverse-square-mile-america/>.

26 See the following link for the Start: ME business incubator: <https://www.startmeatl.org/clarkston>

27 Mark Goldman, High Hopes: The Rise and Decline of Buffalo, New York, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1983 ; Michael F Rizzo, Through the Mayors Eyes: Buffalo, New York 1832-2005, edited by Genevieve M. Kenyon, Buffalo: Old House History, 2005. ; Interview with community stakeholders on 28 October 2019.

28 Emma Sapong, “Biz Talk: East Side entrepreneur helps Bangladeshi immigrants get settled in Buffalo,” The Buffalo News, February 20, 2016. <https://buffalonews.com/2016/02/20/biz-talk-east-side-entrepreneur-helps-bangladeshi-immigrants-get-settled-in-buffalo/>

29 Interview with community stakeholders on November 13, 2019.

STRATEGY 2: CROSS-CUTTING FUNDING AND SUPPORT TO DEVELOP CAPACITY

Thriving ethnic commercial corridors develop through formalized, funded initiatives and organizations that can support the community and its businesses.

The organic development of the organizations and business associations only leads to long-term sustained development when it is accompanied by relevant funding. In each community, a diversity of programs and funding mechanisms support specific initiatives and business development. For example, funding through Downtown Development Authorities (DDAs) or Community Improvement Districts (CIDs) has often led to the establishment of more consistent, cohesive and strategic development efforts that leverage local expertise. Additionally, universities and/or nonprofits have funded initiatives specific to their community. Below are examples from each community that demonstrate how community organizations were formalized and/or funded for a significant period of time.

\$ EAT STREET, MINNEAPOLIS

The Whittier Alliance, a key advocate of Eat Street, was established through the city's Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP),³⁰ which was funded jointly by the state and city through tax increment funds for 20 years. The organization is now funded through some NRP money, the city's Community Participation Program, smaller grants from the city,³¹ and private donations.³² Current projects include:

- A \$1,500 grant for a new street art project on Nicollet Avenue provided by the county and Whittier Alliance³³
- A \$40,000 grant from the City of Minneapolis for business facade improvement³⁴
- Connecting local businesses to county grant funds to establish recycling and composting streams, supported by Whittier Alliance and the county
- A "Big Ideas" Grant Program for community members³⁵

\$ SOUTH GRAND, ST. LOUIS

The South Grand CID is funded through state sales tax (33 percent) and property owners (67 percent).³⁶ Two of the active nonprofits in the area are the International Institute, which provides business support, and the Lutheran Development Group, which provides housing assistance. The International Institute is funded through donations from foundations, the United Way, private donations, and contracts and grants.³⁷ The Lutheran Development Group, together with Rise Community Development, bought and renovated 12 buildings and 47 apartments (\$11.7 million project) in the South Grand neighborhood to make them available at reduced rates to immigrant and refugee families in the area. Nine buildings are completed and eight occupied already.³⁸



South Grand at night. The South Grand CID was funded through sales and property taxes.
Photo: South Grand CID

30 E. Fagotto and A. Fung, "Empowered Participation in Urban Governance: The Minneapolis Neighborhood Revitalization Program," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 30, 2006: 638-655. doi:10.1111/j.1468-2427.2006.00685.x

31 Community Planning & Economic Development, Great Streets Facade Improvement Grant Program Administration Funding Awards (2019-00155), Minneapolis: City of Minneapolis, 23 February 2019. <https://lms.minneapolismn.gov/File/2019-00155>

32 See the following link for Whittier Alliance's website and a summary of their work. <http://www.whittieralliance.org/neighborhood-association.html>

33 See the following link for Whittier Alliance's website dedicated to this grant. <http://www.whittieralliance.org/nicollet-avenue-greenway-signage-artist-call.html>

34 Community Planning & Economic Development, Great Streets Facade Improvement Grant Program Administration Funding Awards (2019-00155).

35 See the following link for Whittier Alliance's website dedicated to this grant. <http://www.whittieralliance.org/hennepin-county-business-recycling-grants.html>

36 Conversation with Rachel Witt, Executive Director of South Grand Community Improvement

37 See the following link for all the annual reports from the International Institute St Louis dating back to 1979. <https://www.iistl.org/annual-reports/>

38 See the following link for the current work being completed by the Lutheran Development Group. <https://www.arcgis.com/apps/Cascade/index.html?appid=d105429da21f401da684b6382cecb651>

STRATEGY 2: continued

\$ CLARKSTON, GEORGIA

Funding and support within the community of Clarkston is channelled primarily through the multiple nonprofits in the area that are dedicated to supporting immigrants and refugees. Many of these nonprofits are funded by private donations and universities, while some also receive public funds. For example, the Clarkston Community Center is funded by the city, local business donations, DeKalb County Youth Services Department, local foundations, and private donations.³⁹ While Clarkston does not currently have a dedicated city-level business association or economic development organization, the current nonprofit organizations bring critical resources to support the community and its continued quality of life improvements.⁴⁰

\$ BROADWAY-FILLMORE, BUFFALO

In contrast to other comparative communities, the activities within Buffalo are broader city-wide initiatives. For example, the Buffalo Billion began in 2008 with the aim of diversifying Buffalo's economy from sole dependency on heavy manufacturing.⁴¹ While the investment has been city-wide, the activities specific to Broadway-Fillmore were added into the Buffalo Billion after the successes of Phase 1.⁴² A component of this funding dedicated to the East Side - Broadway-Fillmore is a part of this broader region in the city - has called for a \$65 million infrastructure investment and highlighted potential sites for redevelopment, such as the Buffalo Central Terminal.⁴³



Numerous nonprofits in Clarkston provide support and capacity development for the city's immigrants and refugees. Above a group works on a beautification project.

Photo: City of Clarkston website

39 See the following link for the website of Clarkston Community Center. <https://clarkstoncommunitycenter.org/about-us>

40 Interview with community stakeholders on October 16, 2019.

41 "The Buffalo Billion Investment Development Plan," Western New York Regional Economic Development Council, February 2013. <http://uploads.oneregionforward.org/content/uploads/2013/06/Buffero-Billion-Investment-Development-Plan.pdf>.

42 "The Buffalo Billion II," East Side Corridor Economic Development Fund, Spring 2019. <https://esd.ny.gov/sites/default/files/Buffero-East-Side-Corridor-Fund.pdf>

43 "Buffalo Niagara's Strategic Plan for Prosperity," Empire State Development, January 2017. https://regionalcouncils.ny.gov/sites/default/files/2017-11/BufferoBillion2_BookREDUCEDforREDCSinglesFeb23.pdf

STRATEGY 3: PUBLIC INVESTMENT INTO PLANNING, INFRASTRUCTURE, AND SAFETY

Ethnic commercial corridors are sustained and developed through planning and investments by the public sector that promote and serve businesses, residents, and visitors.

While the second strategy discussed the need to fund and support organizations dedicated to the development of the area, this strategy focuses on the need for public planning and investment into infrastructure. Those communities most effectively moving forward in this strategy leveraged a variety of public funds from federal, state, county and/or city sources.



SOUTH GRAND, ST. LOUIS

South Grand, as an emerging regional destination, was chosen in the mid-2000s as one of four Great Streets Initiative pilot projects in St. Louis by East-West Gateway Council of Governments, a regional government organization that collects federal transportation dollars for the region.⁴⁴ The project covered a six-block district of South Grand and was funded through federal stimulus dollars (\$2.7 million) and the Great Streets Initiative of East-West Gateway Council of Governments.⁴⁵ East-West Gateway hired an urban engineering contractor to plan and design the streetscape project.⁴⁶ Since



South Grand's streetscape project installed gardens along the boulevard. Behind the gardens is a Turkish restaurant owned by Iraqi refugees who came to St. Louis eight years ago.

Photo: South Grand CID

the project was 'shovel-ready' it was completed faster than expected.⁴⁷ This project reduced four traffic lanes to three,⁴⁸ added lighting and landscaping, sidewalk infrastructure, and rain gardens, funded through an EPA 319 Clean Water Act grant.⁴⁹ The South Grand CID receives ongoing funding from the state's sales taxes to provide small infrastructure improvements, maintain streetscape elements, provide security cameras, and police patrol.



EAT STREET, MINNEAPOLIS

Eat Street in the Whittier neighborhood has been the recipient of significant investment from the city to transition it from an area known for crime to one lauded for its variety of restaurants. In the 1990s, the city identified the street as an area of potential with its diversity of immigrant-owned businesses but with high crime and poor infrastructure. In 1991, the



Flowers by Miss Bertha, opened in 1961, is one of Eat Street's oldest businesses. In 1990 a family of Cambodian immigrants who worked with Miss Bertha took over the business and continue to run it today. Photo: Whittier Alliance Facebook page

44 Design Workshop, South Grand Boulevard GREAT STREETS INITIATIVE, St Louis: East-West Gateway Council of Governments, 2017. <https://www.ewgateway.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/GS-SouthGrand-MasterPlan-Complete.pdf>

45 Kaid Benfield, "St. Louis Leads with Model Project for Smart, Green Streets." Smart Cities Dive, 2017. <https://www.smartcitiesdive.com/ex/sustainablecitiescollective/st-louis-leads-model-project-smart-green-streets/8281/>

46 Design Workshop, South Grand Boulevard GREAT STREETS INITIATIVE.

47 Interview with community stakeholders on October 22, 2019.

48 Ibid., South Grand experiences heavy car traffic - approximately 23,000 cars go through the district each day as well as one of the busiest one bus routes in St Louis runs down South Grand Ave.

49 Rainscaping: A Guide to Local Projects in St. Louis," Rainscaping: A Guide to Local Projects in St. Louis, St Louis: East-West Gateway Council of Governments, 2017. <https://www.ewgateway.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/RainscapingBrochure.pdf>.

STRATEGY 3: continued

Whittier neighborhood received \$8 million from the city for a streetscape revitalization project and rebranding efforts. This project's planning process heavily involved the community and responded to their identified needs.⁵⁰ Currently, there is continued investment through the Whittier Alliance, which works on improving access between the Whittier neighborhood and other parts of the city, ensuring bikeability and pedestrian access to Eat Street. Additionally, the Whittier Alliance has invested in safety through the city's Neighborhood Revitalization Program to fund bike patrol officers that provide extra community-oriented policing within the neighborhood, as well as a "Block Leader" program that works like a neighborhood watch with police department training.⁵¹

Eat Street is continuing to grow from its initial 1.2 mile span north of Nicollet Mall to a longer area crossing a significant barrier of K-Mart and running south on Nicollet Avenue.⁵² The closure of Nicollet Avenue is due to a decision in the 1970s to allow K-Mart to build across the street. At the time, the city was actively searching for investors into the area and K-Mart was interested in the site, on the condition that the city close off the street at Lake Avenue. Some residents strongly opposed the move, and today the K-Mart is a contested issue in the community. While the building breaks up the flow of traffic on Nicollet

Avenue and presents some safety concerns, it also provides needed low cost shopping options for residents in the area, ensuring that lower income residents (many of whom are immigrants) without transportation are able to access basic goods.⁵³ In 2017, the Minneapolis City Council purchased the land that the still-operating K-Mart sits on for \$8 million, with the hopes of eventually opening up the street and redeveloping the land.⁵⁴



CLARKSTON, GEORGIA

The city is currently undergoing a \$6.5 million streetscape revitalization project,⁵⁵ funded through a combination of federal, state, county and city monies. This combination of leveraging monies was critical in assisting a small community with such a large project. The project improves sidewalks, roads, landscaping, street lighting, pedestrian mobility, transportation access, bus shelters, and more. The city reports that the project has already been very positive, particularly for pedestrians and bicyclists, and is planning the next stage of the project, another \$3 million in infrastructure investments.⁵⁶ Additionally, Georgia is planning major highway construction around Clarkston which will begin in 2022, with the goal of easing traffic and shortening commutes to Atlanta.⁵⁷



Existing and proposed plan for a trailhead in Clarkston that will be redeveloped under the current streetscape project.

Photo: City of Clarkston

50 Whittier Alliance and Change Architects, A Decade of Change: The Minneapolis Neighborhood Revitalization Program & The Whittier Neighborhood. Minneapolis: Whittier Alliance, 2001. <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/www/groups/public/@ncr/documents/webcontent/wcms1q-071421.pdf>

51 See the following link for Whittier Alliance's overview of its focus on safety. <http://www.whittieralliance.org/safety.html>

52 Rick Nelson, "New Eat Street: Dining Journey along Nicollet Has Never Been Better," Star Tribune, July 20, 2016. <http://www.startribune.com/the-new-eat-street/388400431/>

53 Interview with community stakeholders on November 4, 2019.

54 Laura Northrup, "Why Is There A Kmart In Minneapolis That Blocks An Entire Street?" Consumer Reports, June 21, 2017. <https://www.consumerreports.org/consumerist/why-is-there-a-kmart-in-minneapolis-that-blocks-an-entire-street/>

55 Manins, Rosie. "Clarkston Breaks Ground on \$6.5 Million Streetscape Project." Crossroads News, May 4, 2018. http://www.crossroadsnews.com/news/local/clarkston-breaks-ground-on-million-streetscape-project/article_5103a250-4fb6-11e8-821d-7f3f420c6d51.html ; See the following link for an overview on Clarkston's Streetscapes project. <http://clarkstonga.gov/streetscapes>

56 Interview with community stakeholders on 16 October 2019.

57 decaturish.com, "Major Road Construction Planned for I-285, Plans to Add Express Lanes Discussed at Open House," Decaturish.com, June 26, 2019. <https://decaturish.com/2019/06/major-road-construction-planned-for-i-285-plans-to-add-express-lanes-discussed-at-open-house/>.

STRATEGY 3: continued

Additional infrastructure funding includes:

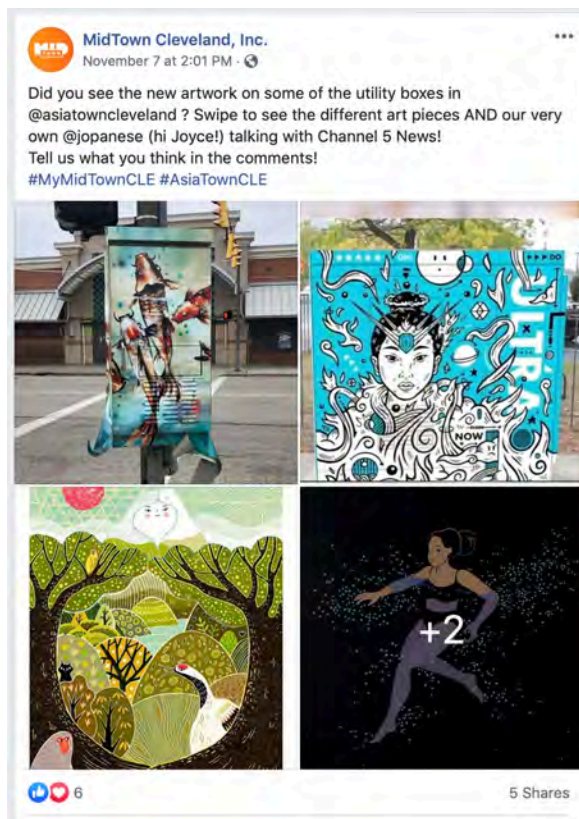
- Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) to fund small infrastructure projects in the city⁵⁸
- Increased city budget for parks and greenspace improvements, and has upgraded a park, installed public pools, and upgraded the soccer fields and basketball hoops⁵⁹
- A federal Opportunity Zone designation for about two-thirds of the city in April 2018. While the city has not yet experienced benefits from this designation, at least one investor looking at Clarkston was aware of the opportunity zone designation⁶⁰
- A 2018 grant (\$40,000) from the National Recreation and Park Association for sustaining parks and new greenspace planning⁶¹

ASIATOWN, CLEVELAND

As with many urban communities, the installation of an interstate (I-90) significantly affected the district, slicing it in half. Currently the district is mostly located to the east of the interstate. The main roadways - Payne, Superior, and St. Claire - have been repaired for potholes and cracks. These streets serve as arteries of movement for the city, but there has not yet been any large public planning effort to incorporate Asiatown more effectively in terms of infrastructure improvements. This has been partially overcome through planning activities sponsored and conducted by companies and development initiatives, such as MidTown Cleveland and St Clair Superior Development Corporation.⁶²

BROADWAY-FILLMORE, BUFFALO

Public investment in Broadway-Fillmore has focused on some road improvements and broader tax incentives. For example, the district's Congressman and City Councilmember lobbied for Opportunity Zones and historic districts to be established in Broadway-Fillmore to entice



MidTown Cleveland is a local development organization focused on improving connections, safety, and community cohesion. The organization holds community events, highlights local businesses, supports residents, and more. Here the organization showcases new artwork installations on utility boxes in Asiatown.
Photo: MidTown Cleveland Facebook post

outside investment while supporting current businesses with tax incentives.⁶³ These efforts were successful and Broadway-Fillmore is now an Opportunity Zone and has two historic districts.⁶⁴

City investment in safety, as well as the image and effectiveness of the police department, occurred through implementing community policing programs. In Broadway-Fillmore, the police department has worked to lower crime rates and conduct positive community outreach in the last five years. Also, a new police substation opened in the Broadway Market, which is at the center of the district's business area, and increased patrols.⁶⁵

⁵⁸ See the following link for Clarkston's website dedicated to SPLOST. <https://clarkstonga.gov/splost>

⁵⁹ Admin, "Why Clarkston, Georgia Has Made Parks a Priority, and What Other Communities Can Learn from This Small City," Saporta Report, July 2, 2018. <https://leadership.saportareport.com/people-places-parks/2018/07/02/why-clarkston-georgia-has-made-parks-a-priority-and-what-other-communities-can-learn-from-this-small-city/>

⁶⁰ Interview with community stakeholders on October 16, 2019.

⁶¹ "National Recreation and Park Association," National Recreation and Park Association, April 26, 2018. <https://www.nrpa.org/About-National-Recreation-and-Park-Association/press-room/nrpa-awards-grant-funding-to-support-cities-participating-in-10-minute-walk-campaign/>.

⁶² Interview with community stakeholders on October 21, 2019.

⁶³ Mark Soomer, "New East Side historic designations come with incentives for homeowners," The Buffalo News (Buffalo, NY), February 7, 2019.

⁶⁴ "Opportunity Zones," City of Buffalo, <https://www.buffalony.gov/1226/Opportunity-Zones>

⁶⁵ "Collaboration, Communication, and Community-Building: A New Model of Policing for 21st Century Buffalo," Partnership for the Public Good, November 2016. <https://digitalcommons.ilr.cornell.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=&httpsredir=1&article=1008&context=buffalocommons>; Deidre Williams, "Broadway Market Police Station Construction Begins in May," The Buffalo News, March 1, 2018. <https://buffalonews.com/2018/03/01/broadway-market-police-station-construction-begins-in-may/>; WIVB Staff, "Buffalo Police Open New Substation at the Broadway Market," WIVB News, August 21, 2019. <https://www.wivb.com/news/local-news/buffalo-buffalo-police-open-new-substation-at-the-broadway-market/>.

STRATEGY 4: ANCHOR ATTRACTIONS AND MARKETING

As an ethnic commercial corridor develops, it attracts a broader base of consumers through its 'anchor' attractions as well as targeted marketing strategies.

Anchor attractions are vital components of ethnic commercial corridors. These provide activities for visitors beyond eating and shopping and often are the initial pulls to the area. For some communities, the 'anchor' attractions are events while for others these attractions are more traditional, such as museums. Marketing and a cohesive identity of the district is also a key component for drawing in regional visitors to restaurants, stores, and local anchor attractions.

EAT STREET, MINNEAPOLIS

Anchor attractions include:

- Minneapolis Institute of Art, Children's Theatre Company, Eat Street Players, Howard Conn Fine Arts Center, and the Minneapolis College of Art and Design Gallery⁶⁶
- "Eat Street Fest," held annually since 2017 and organized by the Whittier Alliance and funded by a city grant⁶⁷



Street banners featuring the Eat Street branding
Photo: Flickr, livewombat

In the 1990s the city's Public Works Department worked with Whittier Alliance to rebrand Nicollet Ave as Eat Street.⁶⁸ Currently, the streets feature signage with a logo to denote this branding. Additionally, the Whittier Alliance has strategic plans that include increasing the number of "destination" businesses to attract local and



A Dining Guide from the Whittier Alliance featuring Eat Street. Other parts of the guide feature the name of the resaturant and those that offer carry-out.
Photo: Whittier Alliance

regional customers to Eat Street.⁶⁹ The Alliance has also worked on creating its own cultural attractions. In 2017, the organization commissioned an oral history project of Eat Street residents which emphasizes that Eat Street is about the success of immigrants.⁷⁰



The annual Eat Street Fest, now in its second year, is organized by Whittier Alliance. The event attracts several thousand attendees and features music, food, activities, and art that represent the diversity of the community.

Photos: Whittier Alliance

⁶⁶ These attractions are located about two blocks away from Eat Street.

⁶⁷ See the following link for Eat Street Fest's website. <https://eatstreetfest.com/>

⁶⁸ See the following link for Whittier Alliance's website dedicated to development efforts led by the alliance. <http://www.whittieralliance.org/development.html>

⁶⁹ Whittier Alliance, "Whittier Alliance: 2019-2024 Strategic Plan," Whittier Alliance: 2019-2024 Strategic Plan. Minneapolis: Whittier Alliance, 2019. http://www.whittieralliance.org/uploads/8/2/6/0/82609372/whittier_alliance_strategic_plan_2019-2024_-_approved.pdf

⁷⁰ Michelle Bruch, "Voices of Eat Street Recorded in Oral History Project," Southwest Journal, August 7, 2017. <https://www.southwestjournal.com/focus/2017/08/voices-of-eat-street-recorded-in-oral-history-project/>.

STRATEGY 4: continued

SOUTH GRAND, ST. LOUIS

Anchor attractions include:

- Missouri Botanical Garden, Tower Grove Park, Compton Hill Park and Water Tower, Magic Chef Mansion, and Stray Dog Theatre

All of these attractions are all in the South Grand neighborhood, and South Grand CID uses them to market the area as a tourist destination⁷¹

South Grand CID hosts several events and festivals throughout the year:

- Annual “South Grand Dine-Around” (11 years running) - an international restaurant festival centered on the restaurants on the Boulevard⁷²
- Annual South Grand Fall Fest (6 years running) - businesses on South Grand Boulevard offer discounts, specials, and entertainment, and South Grand CID organizes other craft and community-oriented activities on the street⁷³
- Grinchmas and Cocoa Crawl (December) - businesses participate in a window decorating contest and offer hot cocoa to event attendees throughout the day⁷⁴



In Fall 2019, the South Grand CID painted its logo on a fire hydrant in the district, and will soon do the same to all the hydrants in the corridor.

Photo: South Grand CID



The annual South Grand Fall Fest, sponsored by local businesses and organized by the South Grand CID, features shopping and dining along the avenue, art, activities, and games.

Photo: South Grand CID



Local business Hadeelah sells crafts and jewelry at the 6th annual South Grand Fall Fest.

Photo: South Grand CID



South Grand's Fall Fest features live music in a pocket park on the avenue that was constructed in 2014 and is maintained by the South Grand CID.

Photo: South Grand CID

⁷¹ "South Grand," Explore St. Louis, December 11, 2018. <https://explorestlouis.com/things-to-do/neighborhoods/south-grand/>

⁷² Debbie Monterrey, "11th Annual South Grand Dine-Around, International Restaurant Crawl," KMOX News Radio, May 15, 2019. <https://kmox.radio.com/articles/south-grand-dine-around-st-louis-international-avenue>

⁷³ South Grand CID, "6th Annual South Grand Fall Fest," South Grand CID Facebook Page, 2019. <https://www.facebook.com/events/390276771608202/>

⁷⁴ See the following link for the event page for South Grand CID. <http://southgrand.org/events/>

STRATEGY 4: continued

The South Grand district promotes itself through an active online presence on social media and a website that features a map, events, attractions, retail, and restaurants. Activities within the neighborhood are strongly marketed on Facebook with event updates. A unique approach for this district was establishing itself as a “Green Dining District” through its work towards recycling and sustainable food, and energy sourcing.⁷⁵



A community event in Ritz Park, the pocket park on South Grand constructed on land owned by the CID in 2014 as a continuation of the Great Streets funding through East-West Gateway Council of Governments.
Photo: South Grand CID



The ethnic business corridor on South Grand Boulevard spans about six blocks and is home to over 20 businesses owned by immigrants from 15 countries. The above map is part of a brochure highlighting the many activities, retail shops, and restaurants on South Grand.
Photo: South Grand CID

ASIATOWN, CLEVELAND

Anchor attractions include:

- The Cleveland Asian Festival, held annually in May, began in 2009 and provides an opportunity for the community to celebrate itself while also providing another venue for local ethnic businesses to advertise and sell their goods and services. The festival has brought in an estimated \$2 million per year to the community.⁷⁶
- Night Market is a monthly event from May to August that provides local Asian businesses the opportunity to sell their products and services on the streets of Asiatown to a metropolitan-wide audience.⁷⁷

Asiatown has positioned itself as a destination for the regional Asian community. For example, Asian shoppers from Erie, PA and Toledo, OH drive to Cleveland to do their shopping.⁷⁸



The Night Market in Asiatown is a monthly event from May to August that draws both regional ethnic and local consumers.
Photo: Night Market Cleveland website

⁷⁵ Rikk Byrd, “South Grand Becomes St. Louis City’s First Green-Dining District,” *Alive Magazine*, May 17, 2018. <http://alivemag.com/south-grand-becomes-st-louis-citys-first-green-dining-district/>.

⁷⁶ Dan Hanson, “The Year of the Dollar: Cleveland’s Asian Population Is Having a Quantifiable Economic Impact on the City,” *Inside Business* 15, no. 3, May 1, 2013. <https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A331688932/ITOF?u=umuser&sid=ITOF&xid=738f6c74>

⁷⁷ Matt Frieden, “GUIDE | Check out Cleveland’s AsiaTown All Year Around,” *wkyc Studios*, June 20, 2019. <https://www.wkyc.com/article/news/local/cleveland/guide-check-out-clevelands-asiatown-all-year-around/95-7d1e5ecc-5d2e-4f96-b9a8-dc0688abe067>. ; Douglas Trattner, “Night Market Cleveland Returns, Announces Dates for 2019 Season,” *Cleveland Scene*, March 29, 2019. <https://www.clevescene.com/scene-and-heard/archives/2019/03/29/night-market-cleveland-announces-dates-for-2019-season>.

⁷⁸ Alan F Dutka. *AsiaTown Cleveland: from Tong Wars to Dim Sum*. Charleston: The History Press, 2014. ; Interview with community stakeholders on October 22, 2019.

STRATEGY 4: continued

In 2019, Asiatown placed signage throughout the district to denote its location (see right photo). There are several websites that promote Asiatown - some focus on events, while others are about resources and businesses for the Asian population in the surrounding region.⁷⁹



Cleveland Asian Festival featuring Asian businesses. The festival has generated about \$2 million per year for the community.
Photo: Cleveland Asian Festival website



This signage was recently installed in Asiatown.
Photo: Asiatown Cleveland brochure



CLARKSTON, GEORGIA

Anchor attractions include:

- Refuge Coffee is a coffee shop in downtown Clarkston that holds events centered around celebrating diversity and the refugee experience and culture. It is becoming a local and regional tourist attraction, as well as a community gathering spot.⁸⁰

Clarkston annual festivals:

- Culture Fest (started 2014) highlights the diversity and cultures of Clarkston's residents through food, music, languages, vendors, and activities. It is organized by a Festival Committee and sponsored by the City of Clarkston, Send Relief, City Hope Community, Friends of Refugees, and other local nonprofits.⁸¹
- Food and Wine Gala (started 2015) celebrates the international cuisines represented by Clarkston residents. It is a ticketed event hosted by Clarkston Community Center which serves as a fundraiser for the Center.⁸²

The city brands itself as the "Ellis Island of the South" and has received fairly consistent and positive media coverage as a unique haven for refugees and immigrants.⁸³



Refuge Coffee is a Clarkston coffee shop that employs refugees and immigrants. It is focused on celebrating the diversity that these populations bring to the community. Refuge is becoming a draw for Georgia residents outside of Clarkston, making it an emerging anchor attraction for the town.
Photo: Refuge Coffee Facebook page

⁷⁹ See the following links for examples: OCA Greater Cleveland Chapter - <https://ocagc.org/>; MidTown Cleveland - <https://midtowncleveland.org/>; Cleveland Asian Festival 2019 - <https://clevelandasianfestival.org/2019/>; Cleveland Night Market - <https://nightmarketcle.com/>; Asiatown Cleveland - <https://asiatowncleveland.org/index.php/2019/03/14/cdcs/>

⁸⁰ See the following link for Refuge Coffee's website. <https://www.refugecoffee.com/>

⁸¹ See the following link for the website of Clarkston's Culture Fest. <http://www.clarkstonculturefest.org/>

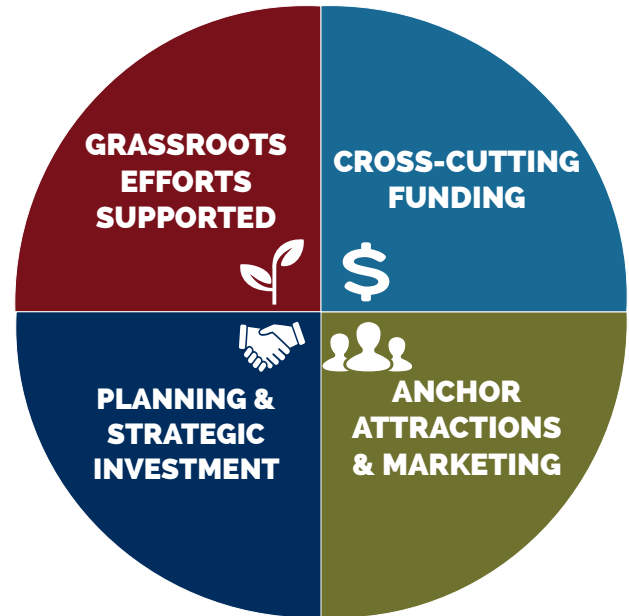
⁸² Neighbor Staff, "Clarkston Community Center to Host Third Annual Food and Wine Gala," Dekalb Neighbor, October 15, 2018. https://www.mdjonline.com/neighbor_newspapers/dekalb/clarkston-community-center-to-host-third-annual-food-and-wine/article_88efe1c2-d08c-11e8-a037-4f47168394bd.html.

⁸³ Shelby Lin Erdman, "Clarkston, Ga., Is Small In Stature But Big On Diversity," WABE, April 27, 2015. <https://www.wabe.org/clarkston-ga-small-stature-big-diversity/>; Shaer, "Ellis Island South: Welcome to the most diverse square mile in America," Stump, "One America": Small town welcomes thousands of refugees with Southern hospitality."

CONCLUSION

Immigrant businesses are critical to the revitalization and growth of Hamtramck and Wayne County. In recognition of this potential, this study provides an overview of successful ethnic commercial corridors and their development strategies. The comparative analysis provides insight and understanding of potential options as the City of Hamtramck and its residents consider economic development strategies for Banglatown.

The four strategies identified in the study provide a framework to understand the development of these corridors. These strategies include **grassroots efforts supported, cross-cutting funding, planning and strategic investment, and anchor attractions and marketing**. Understanding and engaging with grassroots organizations is a fundamental starting point for any commercial district. The local organizations are critical to leading the convening of the community, identifying opportunities and challenges, and directing resources. Cross-cutting funding from multiple sources to support the capacity development of both the residents and its businesses is vital. The public sector must also be invested through planning, infrastructure improvements and a focus on safety. Finally, a marketing identity and anchor attractions are fundamental to promoting corridors and attracting customers from the surrounding region.



The City of Hamtramck has a unique opportunity to engage with the residents and businesses around the development of Banglatown and its potential for growth. These findings should inform and guide Hamtramck and its Banglatown community as they discuss the needs and priorities of the community and develop their own vision. Applying strategies from other corridors, organic growth fueled by government and private support can further Banglatown's development.

APPENDIX

EAT STREET, MINNEAPOLIS, MN

BENCHMARKS

“Eat Street” in the Whittier neighborhood of Minneapolis is a thriving ethnic business corridor known for its wide array of restaurants offering food from around the world. Whittier neighborhood also houses a growing concentration of Somali businesses. Eat Street serves as a comparative community due to its:



Street banners featuring the Eat Street branding
Photo: Flickr, livewombat

High concentration of well-established immigrant-owned businesses

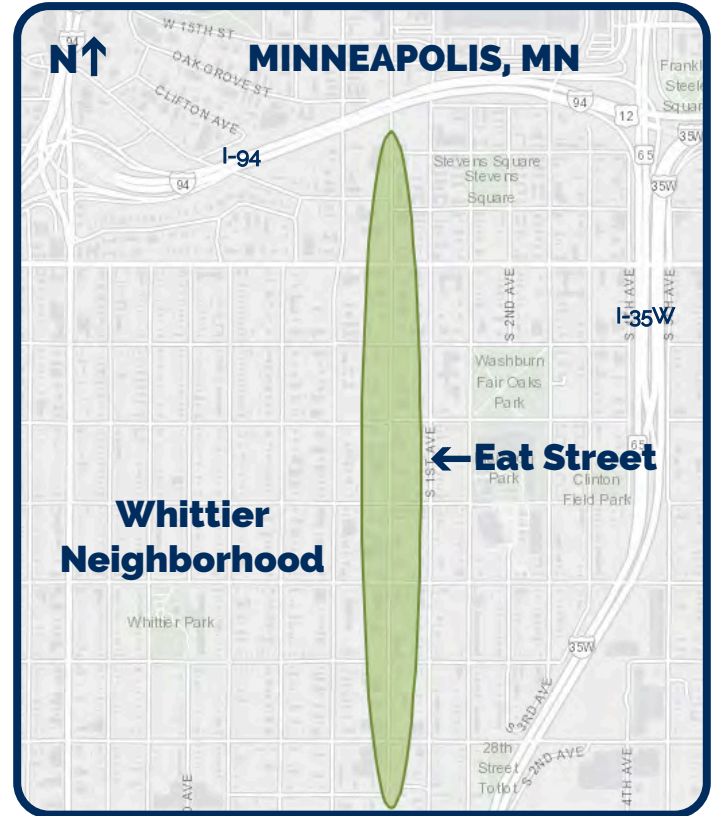
- The Eat Street corridor includes over 40 ethnic businesses, many of which have been operating for ten or more years. These businesses serve both tourists and the local immigrant community.¹

Strong community development led by community-based organizations

- The Whittier Alliance, a nonprofit neighborhood association with city funding, supports neighborhood revitalization, community planning, and business development.

Substantial city investment in the neighborhood

- The City of Minneapolis invested \$7.9 million in road and sidewalk renovations in the mid-1990s to improve the area, which it identified as a place of potential, but encumbered by crime and safety issues.



- The City funds the Whittier Alliance through its Neighborhood Revitalization Program and Community Participation Program.
- The City Council recently purchased the land that the K-Mart sits on with the hopes of eventually opening up the street and redeveloping the land. The building has long been a contentious issue due to the



The annual Eat Street Fest, now in its second year, is organized by Whittier Alliance and funded by the city. The event attracts several thousand attendees and features music, food, activities, and art that represent the diversity of the community.

Photos: Whittier Alliance

¹ “Eat Street & Whittier Neighborhood Dining Guide.” Whittier Alliance. <http://www.whittieralliance.org/dining-guide.html>

APPENDIX: continued

disruption of flow and reduced community cohesion caused by the large shopping center.

Strong anchor attractions and marketing

- There are multiple art and culture attractions near Eat Street, including the Minneapolis Institute of Art and the Minneapolis College of Art and Design Gallery.

Whittier Alliance invests in marketing and branding of the neighborhood

- The organization worked with the city to officially re-brand the corridor as “Eat Street” in the 1990s
- Installed clear signage designating the Eat Street area.
- Hosts an annual “Eat Street Fest” to celebrate the restaurants and businesses on the street.

OVERVIEW

Whittier has been a thriving, well-known, and successful international neighborhood for over ten years. Heavy investments by the city in the 1990s revitalized Eat Street’s infrastructure, improved public safety, supported a strategic rebranding, and provided funding for a local nonprofit to carry forward community development efforts for the next two decades. In 1977, the city blocked off Nicollet Avenue, just south of what is now called the Eat Street corridor, to allow a K-Mart to be built. The box store is a contentious community feature² that the City of Minneapolis has been trying to replace with mixed-used, multi-story development around a re-opened Nicollet Avenue. However, the K-Mart also presents needed low cost shopping options for lower income residents that lack access to a car.³ In 2015, the city purchased the adjacent property for \$5.3 million, and the land that the K-Mart sits on for \$8 million in 2017. However, K-Mart holds the lease through 2053.⁴

Eat Street benefits from many large and well-established cultural and art-focused anchor attractions, as well as the marketing efforts of the Whittier Alliance. The City of Minneapolis continues to invest in the corridor in a manner that suggests long-term strategic planning in the continued success of the area.



Flowers by Miss Bertha, opened in 1961, is one of Eat Street’s oldest businesses. In 1990 a family of Cambodian immigrants who worked with Miss Bertha took over the business and continue to run it today.
Photo: Whittier Alliance Facebook page



Whittier Alliance, a nonprofit funded by the city, supports development and community activities along Eat Street.
Photo: Whittier Alliance Facebook Profile picture

² Drew Ailes, “The 10 Worst Places in Minneapolis,” City Pages, June 26, 2014. <http://www.citypages.com/arts/the-10-worst-places-in-minneapolis-6590442>

³ Interview with community stakeholder November, 4, 2019

⁴ Burl Gilyard, “The K-Mart the City of Minneapolis Wishes Would Go Away,” Twin City Business, June 27, 2018. <http://tcbmag.com/news/articles/2018/july/the-kmart-the-city-of-minneapolis-wishes-would-go>

SOUTH GRAND NEIGHBORHOOD, ST. LOUIS, MO

BENCHMARKS

South Grand neighborhood in St Louis is home to an ethnic business corridor with many immigrant-run businesses that have been operating for over ten years. The neighborhood serves as a comparative community due to its:

High concentration of well-established immigrant-run businesses⁵

- The ethnic business corridor includes 23 businesses run by immigrants from 14 different countries.
- The corridor experiences very low vacancy and business turnover rates. Many ethnic businesses have been operating for over ten years.
- The relocation of the International Institute, a well-funded immigrant services organization, to South Grand, and the affordable housing efforts made by the Lutheran Development Group, are attracting more immigrants to the community.

Strong community-based nonprofits that lead community and business development

- The South Grand Community Improvement District (CID), organized under Missouri legislation in 2001 and funded through sales taxes and local businesses,



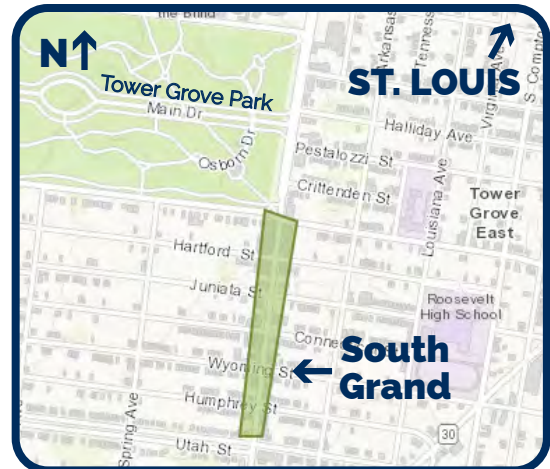
The South Grand CID redeveloped a parking area for residents and visitors. Photo: South Grand Facebook page

⁵ Interview with community stakeholders on October 22, 2019

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ "IISTL Annual Reports 1979-2018." International Institute of St Louis. <https://www.iistl.org/annual-reports/>

⁸ East Fox Homes: Messiah Lutheran Church. Lutheran Development Group. <https://www.arcgis.com/apps/Cascade/index.html?appid=d105429da21f401da684b6382cecb651>.



provides public safety, maintenance, infrastructure improvements, community resources, and marketing for the neighborhood.⁶

- The International Institute provides business support to immigrants, including small loans.⁷
- Lutheran Development Group and Rise Community Development bought and renovated 12 buildings and 27 apartments in South Grand and surrounding neighborhoods (\$11.7 million project), to make housing available at affordable rates to immigrants and refugees in the area. The project is ongoing, nine buildings have been renovated and eight are already occupied.⁸



South Grand's streetscape project, initiated in 2009, installed gardens along the avenue. Behind the gardens is a Turkish restaurant owned by Iraqi refugees who came to St. Louis eight years ago.

Photo: South Grand CID

APPENDIX: continued

Federal and outside investments

- A streetscape project, started in 2009, was funded through federal stimulus funds (\$2.7 million) and the East-West Gateway Council of Governments.⁹ The project reduced the number of traffic lanes, added street lighting and landscaping, and improved sidewalk infrastructure.¹⁰

Well-known anchor attractions and focus on branding

- South Grand neighborhood is home to the Missouri Botanical Garden, Tower Grove Park, Compton Hill Park and Water Tower, Magic Chef Mansion, and Stray Dog Theatre, all well-known tourist destinations in the city.¹¹
- South Grand CID works specifically on the branding of the neighborhood as an “international district” for tourists:
 - ◊ Hosts the annual “South Grand Dine-Around” international restaurant festival catered to tourists and St. Louis residents from outside of South Grand.¹²
 - ◊ Has made investments into “green” dining and infrastructure in order to draw business: the streetscape project included sidewalk rain gardens, which South Grand CID maintains and for which there is a walking tour, and the CID worked to make South Grand a “Green Dining District,” and promotes its vegan-friendly restaurants.¹³



In Fall 2019, the South Grand CID painted its logo on a fire hydrant in the district, and will soon do the same to all the hydrants in the corridor.

Photo: South Grand CID

Grand is also home to several highly active and well-funded nonprofits that provide wraparound support services, including affordable housing and small business loans, to immigrants and refugees in the community. The neighborhood has benefited from federal, regional, and state support in the form of a streetscape project, as well continued funding of the CID.

South Grand today hosts multiple festivals throughout the year, is home to several regionally popular restaurants, and has invested heavily in “green” development of public spaces and restaurants. Crime and safety remain a concern in parts of the neighborhood, but the CID continues to invest in community safety. There is a historic walking tour, several parks and gardens to explore, which serve as anchor attractions for the neighborhood.



South Grand in St. Louis, Missouri, features 23 immigrant-owned restaurants from 14 different countries.

Photo: South Grand CID

OVERVIEW

The South Grand neighborhood of St. Louis became a bustling commercial district in the early 20th century, bolstered by the 1904 World’s Fair in the city. In the 1960s, residents left South Grand for the suburbs and the street experienced vacancy and disinvestment.¹⁴ Since the late 1980s, immigrants have moved to South Grand and have opened successful restaurants and businesses.¹⁵

Community development is driven by the South Grand CID, which invests primarily in public safety, branding and marketing, and small-scale public infrastructure development and maintenance. South



South Grand's Fall Fest features live music in a pocket park on the boulevard that was constructed in 2014 and is maintained by the South Grand CID.

Photo: South Grand CID

⁹ A regional Metropolitan Planning Organization that receives federal, state, and local funds to implement the federal metropolitan planning process for the St. Louis area.

¹⁰ Kaid Benfield, “St. Louis leads with model project for smart, green streets.” Smart Cities Dive. <https://www.smartcitiesdive.com/ex/sustainablecitiescollective/st-louis-leads-model-project-smart-green-streets/8281/>

¹¹ “South Grand.” Explore St. Louis, December 11, 2018. <https://explorestlouis.com/things-to-do/neighborhoods/south-grand/>.

¹² Debbie Monterrey, “11th annual South Grand Dine-Around, international restaurant crawl.” KMOX, May 15, 2019. <https://kmox.radio.com/articles/south-grand-dine-around-st-louis-international-avenue>

¹³ Rikki Byrd, “South Grand Becomes St. Louis City’s First Green-Dining District.” Alive Magazine, May 17, 2018. <http://alivemag.com/south-grand-becomes-st-louis-citys-first-green-dining-district/>

¹⁴ Andrew Weil and Josh Burbridge, “From Prairie to Destination: The Story of South Grand.” The Confluence, Spring/Summer 2017. <https://www.lindenwood.edu/files/resources/the-confluence-spring-summer-2017-weil-burbridge.pdf>

¹⁵ “Part I: Peopling St. Louis.” A Preservation Plan for St. Louis Part I: Historic Contexts. St. Louis MO Government. <https://www.stlouis-mo.gov/government/departments/planning/cultural-resources/preservation-plan/Part-I-Peopling-St-Louis.cfm>

ASIATOWN, CLEVELAND, OH

BENCHMARKS

Cleveland is home to Asiatown, an Asian community that dates back to the 1880s. The community serves as a comparative due to its:

Long-term organic development led by community efforts

- For most of the community's existence, it has relied on internal, organic development. The community slowly opened businesses serving its own needs in three waves: 1950s, 1970s, and 2000s. These waves are associated with the relocation of the community's center into a neighboring area.¹⁶

High concentration of well-established ethnic businesses

- The movement of the community has aided in the creation of three highly concentrated nodes of ethnic businesses through organic, private community investment.
- Asiatown Center is a shopping mall that offers a variety of goods and services oriented primarily towards the residents of Asiatown.
- Asia Plaza offers an assortment of Asian inspired restaurants, as well as an Asian grocery store. The plaza primarily serves the residents of Asiatown, but also hosts the Cleveland Asian Festival every year.



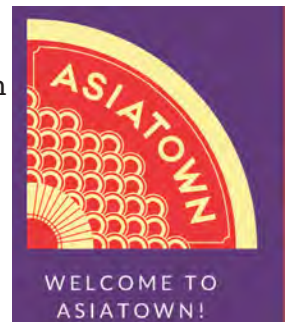
Asia Plaza in Cleveland's Asiatown is one of three concentrated nodes of businesses. The shopping area at 2999 Payne Ave offers an assortment of Asian inspired restaurants, as well as an Asian grocery store. The plaza primarily serves the residents of Asiatown, but also hosts the Cleveland Asian Festival every year.
Photo: Asia Plaza website



- Payne Commons provides an area for Asian restaurants that serve both the residents of Asiatown and the non-Asian community of Cleveland.¹⁷

Focus on cultural events to create an image for the broader non-Asian community

- In the past decade, the community has organized several cultural events to form a public image of Asiatown. In turn, they hope to spur new investment and attract new consumers from the non-Asian community.
- Cleveland Asian Festival is held in May and is an opportunity for the community to celebrate itself while also providing another venue for local ethnic businesses to advertise and sell their goods and services. The festival has generated an estimated \$2 million per year to the community.¹⁸



This signage was recently installed in Asiatown.
Photo: Asiatown Cleveland brochure

16 See the following book for a complete description of the history of Asiatown and the ways the community formed and reformed itself since the 1880s.

Alan F. Dutka, *AsiaTown Cleveland: from Tong Wars to Dim Sum*. Charleston: The History Press, 2014.

17 Debbie Snook, "New life sprouting in old Chinatown Five restaurants, housing, museum planned," *The Plain Dealer*, September 20, 2011. <https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/139E763F746187D8&f=basic> ;

Michelle Jarboe, "Six Cleveland projects awarded state tax credits," *The Plain Dealer*, December 17, 2015. <https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/159CC1BE8E03C08&f=basic> ;

Michelle Jarboe, "8 sites get preservation tax credits," *The Plain Dealer*, June 29, 2016. <https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/15DD057A4C8F6888&f=basic>

18 Dan Hanson, "The year of the dollar: Cleveland's Asian population is having a quantifiable economic impact on the city," *Inside Business*, May-June 2013, N3+. Gale General OneFile <https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A331688932/ITOF?u=umuser&sid=ITOF&id=738f6c74>; Cleveland Asian Festival, 2019. <https://clevelandasianfestival.org/2019/>.

APPENDIX: continued

- Night Market is a monthly event from May to August that provides local Asian businesses the opportunity to sell their products and services on the streets of Asiatown to a metropolitan-wide audience.¹⁹

OVERVIEW

Asiatown dates back to the nineteenth century and the arrival of some of the first Chinese immigrant workers on railroads and factories. The community steadily grew as more families, mainly from China, relocated to Cleveland in hopes of working in the factories.²⁰ Following World War II, new groups of Asian people moved to Cleveland; Japanese after World War II; Koreans throughout the 1940s and 50s; Vietnamese in the 1960s and 70s.²¹ With the influx of different ethnic groups, Chinatown became Asiatown in 2007 as the community engaged through a common background, Asia.²²

Ethnic businesses opened in three waves, which correspond to movement of the heart of Asiatown: 1950s, 1970s, and 2000s.²³ The resurgence of Asiatown has been built on organic, community-led initiatives that support both the residents of Asiatown, as well as the broader Asian community that stretches from Erie, PA to Toledo, OH. In an effort to support this growth, the city, aided by MidTown Cleveland and St Claire Development Corporation, started repairing sidewalks and lighting along Payne Avenue.²⁴ Since these improvements began in 2008, the above named private development corporations have become more involved in the planning of future investments, with a particular focus on businesses and ease of movement in the district.

In the past ten years, private investment, led by MidTown Cleveland and St. Clair Development Corporation, has worked in tandem with community efforts to craft a public image through both the Cleveland Asian Festival and the Night Market to draw non-Asian consumers to the area. For example, street signs demarcating the extent of Asiatown were placed in Spring 2019 throughout the district.²⁵ This new wave of consumers helped ensure stable economic growth, but also has



The Night Market in Asiatown is a monthly event from May to August that draws both regional ethnic and local consumers.
Photo: Night Market Cleveland website



Cleveland Asian Festival featuring Asian businesses. The festival has generated about \$2 million per year for the community.
Photo: Cleveland Asian Festival website

begun to gentrify surrounding areas.²⁶ In addition to some initial gentrification, the community is facing communication issues with the city.²⁷

19 Matt Frieden, "Check out Cleveland's AsiaTown all year around." WKYC Studios, May 1, 2019. <https://www.wkyc.com/article/news/local/cleveland/guide-check-out-clevelands-asiatown-all-year-around/95-7d1e5ecc-5d2e-4f96-b9a8-dc0688abe067>; Douglas Trattner, "Night Market Cleveland Returns, Announces Dates for 2019 Season." Scene, March 29, 2019. <https://www.clevelandscene.com/scene-and-heard/archives/2019/03/29/night-market-cleveland-announces-dates-for-2019-season>

20 "Asiatown." Encyclopedia of Cleveland History. Case Western Reserve University. <https://case.edu/ech/articles/a/asiatown>; "Immigrant Impact." Global Cleveland. <https://globalcleveland.org/about/immigrant-impact/>

21 "Ohio Asian Americans." Ohio Development Services Agency. <https://development.ohio.gov/files/research/P7004.pdf>

22 Alan F. Dutka, *AsiaTown Cleveland: from Tong Wars to Dim Sum*. Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2014.

23 Ibid.

24 Interview with community stakeholder on October 21, 2019.

25 "Asia Town Eats: A Guide to Cleveland's Asian Food Scene." AsiaTown Cleveland. March 14, 2019. <https://asiatowncleveland.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/AsiaTown-Where-to-Eat-Guide.pdf>

26 Smith, Robert, "Cleveland's growing Asian community makes an outsized impact." Cleveland.com, January 12, 2019 https://www.cleveland.com/business/2012/10/clevelands_growing_asian_commu.html

27 Interview with community stakeholder on October 21, 2019..

CLARKSTON, GA

BENCHMARKS

Clarkston is a small town outside of Atlanta, Georgia that has come to be known as the “most diverse square-mile in America.”²⁸ The town serves as a comparative community due to its:

Large, diverse population of immigrants and refugees

- Refugees have called Clarkston home for over 30 years, and the city has thus formed an identity as an “Ellis Island” for immigrants.

High concentration of immigrant-owned businesses

- The majority of businesses in Clarkston are owned or operated by immigrants or refugees.²⁹

Robust nonprofit support for immigrants and refugees

- Numerous nonprofit organizations have provided aid and support to new immigrant and refugee populations since the 1980s in the form of housing support, business development, education, and language support.
- These nonprofits focus on celebrating Clarkston’s diversity and the cultures and histories of all of the town’s residents.



Refuge Coffee is a Clarkston coffee shop that employs refugees and immigrants and is focused on celebrating the diversity that these populations bring to the community. Refuge is becoming a draw for Georgia residents outside of Clarkston, making it an emerging anchor attraction for the town.

Photo: Refuge Coffee Facebook page



- Clarkston has multiple community gathering spaces that specifically highlight refugee and immigrant cultures.

Public sector investments in the community

- Clarkston is currently undergoing a nearly \$20 million streetscape revitalization project that began in 2018. This project is funded by federal, state, county, and city resources.³⁰
- In 2018, the federal government designated about two-thirds of Clarkston as a Federal Opportunity Zone.³¹

Private sector investment

- Several private developments are currently under construction in Clarkston - two tiny home compounds (two separate developers), new townhomes, and a large church complex.³²

OVERVIEW

Clarkston was a majority white community until the 1970s, when residents began to leave for the suburbs. In the 1980s, refugees from Southeast Asia began arriving in the town. At the same time,

28 Matthew Shaer, “Ellis Island South: Welcome to the most diverse square mile in America” Atlanta Magazine (Atlanta, GA), January 19, 2017 <https://www.atlantamagazine.com/great-reads/ellis-island-south-welcome-diverse-square-mile-america/>

29 Interview with community stakeholders on October 16, 2019.

30 “Streetscapes.” City of Clarkston. <http://clarkstonga.gov/streetscapes>

31 “Federal Opportunity Zones Announced for Georgia.” Georgia Department of Community Affairs. April 18, 2018. <https://www.dca.ga.gov/newsroom/news-releases/federal-opportunity-zones-announced-georgia>

32 Terry Sanders, “Clarkston, A City Under Construction.” City of Clarkston Connection, April 2019. <http://clarkstonga.gov/sites/default/files/inline-files/Clarkston%20Newsletter%20Spring%202019.pdf>

APPENDIX: continued

the community started to accept refugees and immigrants and has done so ever since.³³ Clarkston has embraced its role as a community for refugees by helping families assimilate to the area and become a part of the community, rather than remain 'outsiders.'³⁴ This slow expansion of the community over the last two decades allowed the town to incorporate the needs of refugees by promoting restaurants, shops, and religious buildings based around their cultures.³⁵

Local economic expansion was supported by the state, county, and metro Atlanta governments. Clarkston has received numerous investments from several different sources to improve their gateway traffic, safety for pedestrians and bicycles, public transportation, and beautification of meeting areas. All of these efforts were oriented towards improving movement to and within the area that contains businesses run by immigrants and refugees.³⁶ Although its poverty rate (33%) is significantly higher than the national average (13.4%), Clarkston has experienced several years of moderate job growth and increases in median income.³⁷ For roughly 15 years, Clarkston's growth was locally organized and it has only been in the past several years that the town has received support from outside its own borders.

Today, Clarkston is undergoing a large streetscape revitalization project, has seen an influx of private investment, and has cultivated an image as a community that is accepting of immigrants and refugees from all over the world. Refuge Coffee,



A local reading event hosted by the Clarkston CDF, a nonprofit focused on connecting and engaging the diverse residents of Clarkston and transforming education in the community. This is just one of many nonprofit organizations in Clarkston that support community development.
Photo: Clarkston CDF Facebook page

a small coffee shop in the heart of downtown Clarkston that centers its business around building immigrant skills while celebrating the diversity of the community, has become an attraction for those who live outside of the town. Thus, Clarkston is slowly constructing a future that fully incorporates and embraces its immigrant and refugee residents.



Existing and proposed plan for a trailhead in Clarkston that will be redeveloped under the current streetscape project.
Photo: City of Clarkston

33 Stump, Scott, "Clarkston, Georgia, is home to thousands of refugees." Today.com, July 3, 2018. <https://www.today.com/news/clarkston-georgia-home-thousands-refugees-t132421>
34 Ibid.
35 Shaer, Matthew, "Ellis Island South: Welcome to the most diverse square mile in America." Atlanta Magazine (Atlanta, GA), January 19, 2017 <https://www.atlantamagazine.com/great-reads/ellis-island-south-welcome-diverse-square-mile-america/>
36 Qawiy, Shawanna, "Clarkston 2040-The Comprehensive Plan Update." City of Clarkston Connection, April 2016 <https://clarkstonga.gov/file-download/download/public/1338>
37 "Clarkston, GA," Data USA. <https://datausa.io/profile/geo/clarkston-ga/#economy>

BROADWAY-FILLMORE, BUFFALO, NY

BENCHMARKS

“Buffalo’s Renaissance”³⁸ extends to the Broadway-Fillmore district in the city’s East Side. This district serves as a comparative community due to its: *Surge of Bengali migrants from east coast cities since the 2008 Financial Crisis*

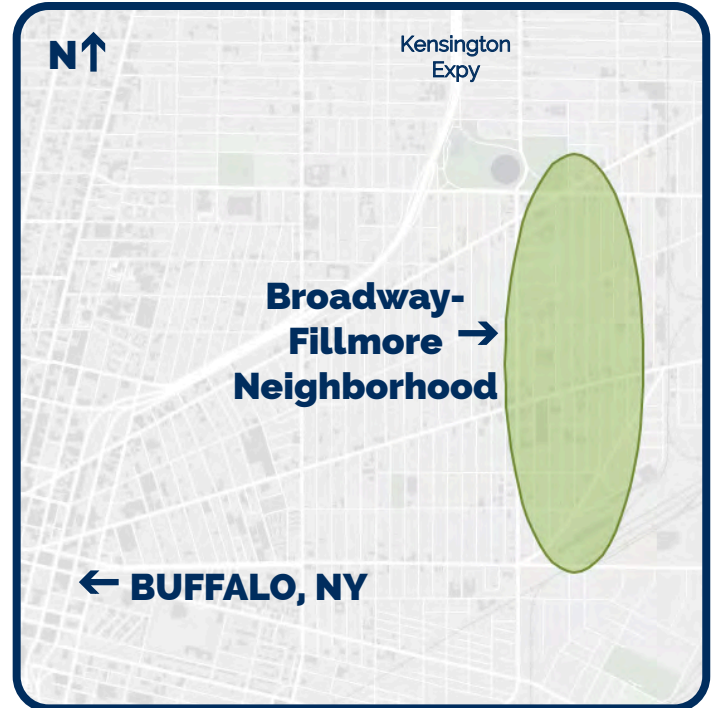
- Cheap foreclosed housing that was auctioned off provided Bengali people the ability to purchase a house and start a new life
- The homes were repaired over several years by men. Afterwards, their families moved to Buffalo for job opportunities, an increase in standard of living, and the chance to start a new life.
- Most Bengalis worked as taxi drivers or in office jobs. They steadily saved money which was used to either continue repairs on their new homes or open new businesses in the district.³⁹

Informal and formal networks of support for new migrants and business owners

- Informal networks were crucial to the resettlement of Bengali families to Buffalo. Atiqur Rahman operated an accounting firm and a hardware store in the district that was used to help new families repair their homes, open a new business, and become part of the community.⁴⁰
- Formal networks have centered on the Westminster Economic Development Initiative (WEDI). They provide a space for migrants to test out their business ideas at the West Side Bazaar and receive necessary support, ranging from start up funds to taxes, for new businesses.⁴¹

Support from the City and State with public investments and investment incentives

- In 2008, New York State initiated the Buffalo Billion - Phase 1 in an attempt to diversify Buffalo’s economy. For Broadway-Fillmore, the program brought millions of dollars that were used to repair streets, refurbish public places, and provide cheap housing via auctions.⁴²
- The success of the Bengali community in opening businesses provided the



WEDI is a nonprofit that provides support for immigrant businesses
Photo: WEDI Facebook page

38 Epps, Taylor, “The next phase of Buffalo’s renaissance.” WKBW Buffalo, September 18, 2019. <https://www.wkbw.com/news/local-news/the-next-phase-of-buffalos-renaissance>
39 Sapong, Emma, “Bangladeshis transforming Buffalo, one block at a time.” The Buffalo News, December 12, 2015. <https://buffalonews.com/2015/12/12/bangladeshis-transforming-buffalo-one-block-at-a-time/>; “Bangladeshi Immigrants in Buffalo.” Partnership for the Public Good, June 2016. https://ppgbuffalo.org/files/documents/data-demographics-history/populations_and-cultural_groups/datademographicshistory-bangladeshi-immigrants_in_buffalo.pdf
40 Sapong, Emma, “Biz Talk: East Side entrepreneur helps Bangladeshi immigrants get settled in Buffalo.” The Buffalo News, February 20, 2016. <https://buffalonews.com/2016/02/20/biz-talk-east-side-entrepreneur-helps-bangladeshi-immigrants-get-settled-in-buffalo/>
41 See their website for more details on their efforts. <https://www.wedibuffalo.org/>
42 “The Buffalo Billion Investment Development Plan.” Western New York Regional Economic Development Council, February 2013. <http://uploads.oneregionforward.org/content/uploads/2013/06/Buffalo-Billion-Investment-Development-Plan.pdf>

APPENDIX: continued

impetus for the City and State to expand the East Side plans for Phase 2 of the Buffalo Billion.⁴³

- The district became a federal opportunity zone⁴⁴ and specific parts were designated as a historic district.⁴⁵
- Both of these initiatives have laid the groundwork for further investment that supports the Phase 2, but more importantly the community and its needs.

OVERVIEW

Buffalo used to be one of the world's largest producers of steel and the tenth largest city in the United States. Since World War II, the city has experienced a series of catastrophic events that ripped through the Rust Belt.⁴⁶ The long-term decline of Buffalo only began to reverse after the 2008 Financial Crisis due to intensive and extensive work by the city and state governments to diversify Buffalo's economy.

For decades, the Broadway-Fillmore district was neglected by the state, county, and city governments due to crime, lack of economic activity, and abandoned properties. In 2008, Bengali families began buying homes through auctions, repairing them over several years, and then moving their families to the city. Once here, these people worked as taxi drivers and laborers until they had enough money to open small businesses that met the local community's needs and wants.⁴⁷

After a few initial successes, the district began to receive support from the state and city governments through tax breaks, state investments, and redistricting efforts.⁴⁸ These efforts have led to a general resurgence of the district which has brought a sense of optimism to the community.⁴⁹ The future of the Bengali community is unknown and will remain so for some time as several state-level projects are being planned.

THE BUFFALO NEWS

Biz Talk: East Side entrepreneur helps Bangladeshi immigrants get settled in Buffalo



New owner of the old library building on Broadway turned hardware store, Atiqur Rahman, on Friday, Oct. 2, 2015. (Robert Kirkham/Buffalo News)

A news article from 2015 featuring Atiqur Rahman and his work with his fellow Bengalis
Photo: The Buffalo News website



The Buffalo Central Terminal lies at the heart of Broadway-Fillmore. The city and state are currently planning the redevelopment of the landmark.
Photo: Buffalo Central Terminal website

43 "Buffalo Niagara's Strategic Plan for Prosperity." Western New York Regional Economic Development Council, January 2017. https://buffalobillion.ny.gov/sites/default/files/images/sites/all/default/files/media/BuffaloBillion2_BookREDUCEDforREDCSinglesFeb23.pdf; "The Buffalo Billion II." East Side Corridor Economic Development Fund, Spring 2019. <https://esd.ny.gov/sites/default/files/Buffalo-East-Side-Corridor-Fund.pdf>

44 "Opportunity Zones." City of Buffalo. <https://www.buffalony.gov/1226/Opportunity-Zones>

45 "Historic Tax Credits." Preservation Buffalo Niagara, July 11, 2019. <https://preservationbuffaloniagara.org/save-a-place/historictaxcredits/>.

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49 Sapong, Emma, "Biz Talk: East Side entrepreneur helps Bangladeshi immigrants get settled in Buffalo." The Buffalo News (Buffalo, NY), February 20, 2016. <https://buffalonews.com/2016/02/20/biz-talk-east-side-entrepreneur-helps-bangladeshi-immigrants-get-settled-in-buffalo/>

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Contact


Economic Growth Institute

506 E. Liberty Street, 3rd Floor
Ann Arbor, MI 48104

 734-998-6201

 734-998-6202

 economicgrowth@umich.edu

 [@Econ_Growth](https://twitter.com/Econ_Growth)

Email economicgrowth@umich.edu to subscribe to the Institute's news.